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# Hidden Springs

STATE FOREST



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CONSERVATION

## THE FOREST

Hidden Springs State Forest (formerly known as Shelby State Forest) consists of approximately 1,200 acres of land near Clarksburg, 10 miles southeast of Shelbyville.

**History:** The name Hidden Springs was selected to designate this particular state forest because of the seven known springs on the property which were used for drinking water by the Indians and early settlers. Over the years these springs have been covered over by natural siltation and vegetation (hence the name "Hidden Springs"). Rocky Spring and Quicksand Spring have trail access.

The entire forest area was originally planned as a state lake. These plans were altered when the construction of Shelbyville Reservoir began. The property was then assigned to the Division of Forestry in 1960 to be managed as a state forest. Following reorganization of the department in 1975 the property was reassigned to the Division of Land and Historic Sites. The area continues to be managed under the concept of multiple-use — sound timber and resource management complimented by compatible recreational opportunities.

**Terrain:** The forest ownership consists of three separate tracts covering portions of eight sections of land. The terrain varies from flat bottom-land areas along Richland Creek (which flows diagonally from northeast to southwest the entire length of the forest) to relatively steep hill-sides. Generally the topography is gently rolling and broken by small draws and streams.

**Trees:** Native trees in the forest include white, red, black, bur, post, pin, shingle and chinquapin oaks; ash; hickory; sugar maple; sycamore; silver maple; black walnut and cottonwood. Plantations of native and introduced species include white, red and scotch pine; red cedar; sweet gum; butterjaps; tulip poplar; black locust and cottonwoods. In addition, many other

shrubs and minor individual species of trees are located throughout the forest.

## **TIMBER MANAGEMENT**

A white pine and a scotch pine seed orchard are managed for the production of superior seed for use at the state tree nurseries. White pine cones are collected in August before the cones open and the seeds are allowed to fall out. Volunteer groups help collect scotch pine cones during the fall. Many different types of seeds and nuts are collected throughout the forest and sent to the state nurseries for processing and planting.

Thinning of some of the many pine plantations has begun, with the thinned areas being used for wildlife food and cover plantings. Eliminated trees are "chipped" and the shredded wood is spread on the forest trails. A demonstration pine management area shows the desired thinning and pruning process to be carried out in the pine plantations.

A scotch pine area has been planted to be used exclusively for Christmas tree shearing demonstrations.

Management aims also include the growing of hardwoods, such as oak and black walnut. A forest improvement demonstration area shows the types of trees which would be removed in properly managed woodlands. Several areas are being managed for black walnut production using corrective pruning and vegetation control. Six experimental burn plots are maintained to show the effects of woods fire.

Some of the forest property, when first acquired, showed the detrimental effects of erosion. Immediate steps were initiated to reduce the ravages to the topsoil. Reforestation, terracing, grass seeding, sodding and toe wall construction are practices in use at Hidden Springs to stabilize the soil. Close cooperation with the soil Conservation Service's technical personnel has been beneficial.



## **FACILITIES**

**Picnicking:** Rolling Meadows picnic area offers a large shelter, water, playground equipment, privies, tables, stoves and a fire ring. Red Bud Lane, on the south end of this area, provides three small secluded sites. A small picnic area at the Big Tree has tables and stoves.

**Camping:** Possum Creek, a class "C" campground, includes water, privie, sanitary disposal station, pedestal stoves, fire blocks and a fire ring. Campers may set up camp on the site of their choice. Forest staff issue permits on routine rounds. Shady Grove Campground accommodates groups by reservation only. Ground fires in both areas are allowed only in the fire rings provided.

**Fishing:** Four fishing ponds, one accessible by vehicle, the other three by foot only, are found on the forest property. Fish stocked are bass, bluegill, redear and channel catfish. Richland Creek flows the length of the forest but fishing opportunities are negligible. Swimming anywhere on forest property is strictly prohibited.

**Hiking:** Possum Hollow Nature Trail,  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile in length, provides access to Park Pond and the pine seed orchard. Trail guides, available at the headquarters, campground, and picnic area, guide the visitor the the 35 interpretive stations. The Big Tree Trail, one mile in length, features a sycamore 78 inches in diameter, one of the largest to be found in Illinois. Rocky Spring Trail, 3 miles in length, includes Rocky Spring, a forest improvement area, walnut production areas and varied land and vegetation types. Seventeen miles of fire lanes also provide access to remote areas of the forest. Your cooperation in keeping both motorcycles and horses off the foot trails and fire lanes is appreciated.

A pleasurable and peaceful forest environment awaits the visitor. A bird check list is available at the headquarters to those who come to en-

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joy the many songbirds on the area. Flowers and mushrooms grow prolifically throughout the forest.

**Hunting:** Except for the 240 acres where the headquarters, campground and Rolling Meadows picnic area are located, the entire area is open to hunting. Only shotgun and bow and arrow are permitted. Hunting fact sheets and maps concerning species and times are available at 10 hunter parking lots or the forest headquarters. Hunters are required to complete hunter survey cards for each hunting trip. Please consult the forest superintendent if in question about boundaries, hours, or any other aspect of the hunting program. Wildlife food plots, providing habitat for the varied wildlife population are scattered throughout the area.

**Please:** This area is for all to enjoy. Keep all vehicles on gravel roads, pads, or parking lots. Put all litter in the nearest available trash container. No plants, flowers, shrubs, or trees may be removed or damage. Always be careful with any type of fire and report fires to the forest headquarters as soon as possible. If you need help, or have a question, feel free to contact the forest superintendent.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Other state forests include Big River in northwestern Illinois, Sand Ridge in north central Illinois and Trail of Tears in southern Illinois.

For more details, contact the Forest Superintendent, Box 200, RFD 1, Strasburg, 62465, phone 217/644-3091. For information on other Illinois sites, write the Department of Conservation, 600 North Grand Avenue West, Springfield, IL 62701.

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